



Press Release



**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
Michigan, 14th District**

**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/index.html

For Immediate Release:
September 28, 2005

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Conyers Opposes Manager's Amendment to H.R. 3402

Amendment Would Limit Domestic Violence Grants to Communities of Color

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., issued the following statement regarding the Manager's Amendment to H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act:

"This amendment would significantly weaken the bill's emphasis on domestic violence grant funding for communities of color. This is why the amendment is opposed by the groups that are working so hard to prevent rape and sexual assault – the National Network to End Domestic Violence; the Family Violence Prevention Fund; the National Coalition to End Domestic Violence; Legal Momentum; the NAACP; and the Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault.

The bill that passed both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees contains language ensuring that minorities who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault would receive adequate services. The Members of the Judiciary Committee agreed – on a bipartisan basis – that this language was necessary because the bureaucrats at the Department of Justice were ignoring communities of color when considering grants from domestic violence, rape prevention and other organizations.

This is a serious problem because we know that people of color are far less likely than other groups to report incidents of rape and sexual assault. The only way we can reach out to these individuals is by supporting these non-traditional groups.

Unfortunately, between the Judiciary Committee and the floor, this provision – which has been in the bill since its introduction – suddenly became controversial. Out of the blue, the Administration has attempted to argue that there might, possibly be a constitutional problem with this provision.

Under current law, since the Supreme Court's decision in Adarand v. Peña and Grutter v. Bollinger, specific set asides that are race-based have been subject to strict scrutiny. Clearly, there are no such set asides or quotas in the bill that passed the Judiciary Committee.

There is no set aside. There is no quota. Considering the needs of certain communities in no way violates the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause, and I would hope that the Members of this body would agree with that very common sense notion."